

CHAPTER: XI PAYMENT METHODS	SECTION: 4 AGED BENEFITS	COMAR: 07.03.03.13
---------------------------------------	------------------------------------	------------------------------

REQUIREMENTS

- A. All local departments must comply with the standards set by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on handling aged benefits
- B. In order to conform with USDA requirements, streamline procedures, and synchronize the cash assistance and food stamps programs under the Family Investment Program, the local department can shorten the certification period when a household does not access their:
 1. Cash assistance within 45 days after issuance, or
 2. Food stamps within 45 days after issuance

Note: If the customer receives both food stamps and cash assistance, but only accesses the cash assistance, only the food stamp certification period is shortened. If the food stamp is accessed, but not the cash assistance, only the cash assistance certification period is shortened.

PROCEDURES

- A. The electronic benefit transfer system (EBTS) identifies all accounts, both food stamps and cash assistance, that have not been accessed for 45 days
- B. This information is listed on the EBT Aged Authorization Report under the 30 day column
- C. The EBT Aged Authorization Report is issued the 15th of each month and sent to the local department
- D. Upon receipt of the report, the local department:
 1. Identifies case accounts that have not been accessed for 45 days
 2. Sends a modified Notice of Expiration to advise the household:
 - That questions exist about the household's continued need for TCA and/ or for food stamps because the benefits were not accessed
 - To use the Maryland Independence Card, or contact the local department to explain why the benefits are not being used

CHAPTER: XI PAYMENT METHODS	SECTION: 4 AGED BENEFITS	COMAR: 07.03.03.13
---------------------------------------	------------------------------------	------------------------------

- That the household's certification will end if the card is not used and/or if the household fails to contact the local department on or before the date given in the notice of adverse action

E. If the benefits are accessed or the local department hears from the household, benefits will continue through the established certification period

Note: Any cash assistance and/or food stamps account not accessed for 90 days is automatically handled by the CARES system as **abandoned** and a report is generated. A customer, with a valid reason, can request to have unaccessed cash assistance or food stamps benefits restored within a year from the date of issuance.

EXAMPLES

Example 1. The case manager received and reviewed the EBT Aged Authorization Report on January 18th. The report listed the case of Mr. Bland in the 30 day column as not accessing his TCA benefits.

- On January 19th, the case manager sent Mr. Bland a Notice of Adverse Action to advise him that his TCA certification period would end on January 31, 2000 unless he contacted the case manager or used the benefits in his account. Mr. Bland contacted the case manager on January 26th to state that the benefits had not been accessed because he had been hospitalized for a month, but was home now and would be using the benefits. There is no need for further action by the case manager. The certification period continues without interruption

Example 2. On the same report received January 18th, the case of Mrs. Coleman, who receives cash assistance as well as food stamps, was listed in the 30 day column as not accessing her food stamp benefits only.

- A Notice of Expiration was sent on January 26th advising her that food stamps would end on March 31, 2000 unless she used the benefits in her account or contacted the case manager. Her cash assistance is not affected because that account was accessed. Mrs. Coleman never responded to the notice, and her food stamp certification period is shortened (food stamps are terminated).

Note: When Mrs. Coleman's cash assistance case is reviewed for continuing eligibility, the matter of the food stamps must be discussed.

CHAPTER: XI PAYMENT METHODS	SECTION: 4 AGED BENEFITS	COMAR: 07.03.03.13
---------------------------------------	------------------------------------	------------------------------

Example 3. On the same report, the case of Mrs. Adams, who lives in St. Mary's county, was listed as not accessing her cash assistance or food stamp benefits.

- She was sent a Notice of Expiration advising her that she needed to contact the case manager or use the benefits in her two accounts. Mrs. Adams contacted the case manager to inform him that she had been staying with and caring for her ill mother who lives in Virginia for the past few weeks. She explained that she did not need to purchase any food while caring for her mother and that she had made arrangements for extensions on her own household bills until she returned home. Her mother is now able to manage without help, and Mrs. Adams is returning home in a couple of days. She will be using both of her accounts. The certification period for the food stamps and the cash assistance continues.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Electronic Benefit Transfer System (EBTS)
- Adverse Action